

Old Occitan

Old Occitan (Modern Occitan: *occitan ancian*, Catalan: *occità antic*), also called **Old Provençal**, was the earliest form of the Occitano-Romance languages, as attested in writings dating from the eighth through the fourteenth centuries.^{[2][3]} Old Occitan generally includes Early and Old Occitan. Middle Occitan is sometimes included in Old Occitan, sometimes in Modern Occitan.^[4] As the term *occitanus* appeared around the year 1300,^[5] Old Occitan is referred to as "Romance" (Occitan: *romans*) or "Provençal" (Occitan: *proensals*) in medieval texts.

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Old Occitan	
Old Provençal	
Region	Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiné, Auvergne, Limousin, Aquitaine, Gascony
Era	8th–14th centuries
Language family	<div>Indo-European<ul style="list-style-type: none">Italic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Romance<ul style="list-style-type: none">Western<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gallo-Romance<ul style="list-style-type: none">Occitano-Romance<ul style="list-style-type: none">Old Occitan</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-2	pro (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=365)
ISO 639-3	pro
Glottolog	oldp1253 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/oldp1253) ^[1]

History

Among the earliest records of Occitan are the *Tomida femina*, the *Boecis* and the *Cançó de Santa Fe*. Old Occitan, the language used by the troubadours, was the first Romance language with a literary corpus and had an enormous influence on the development of lyric poetry in other European languages. The interpunct was a feature of its orthography and survives today in Catalan and Gascon.

Old Catalan and Old Occitan diverged between the 11th and the 14th centuries.^[6] Catalan never underwent the shift from /u/ to /y/ or the shift from /o/ to /u/ (except in unstressed syllables in some dialects) and so had diverged phonologically before those changes affected Old Occitan.

Phonology

Old Occitan changed and evolved somewhat during its history, but the basic sound system can be summarised as follows:^[7]

Consonants

Old Occitan consonants

	<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Labio-dental</u>	<u>Dental/alveolar</u>	<u>Postalveolar/palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>
<u>Nasal</u>	<u>m</u>		<u>n</u>	<u>ɲ</u>	
<u>Plosive</u>	<u>p</u> <u>b</u>		<u>t</u> <u>d</u>		<u>k</u> <u>g</u>
<u>Fricative</u>		<u>f</u> <u>v</u>	<u>s</u> <u>z</u>		
<u>Affricate</u>			<u>ts</u> <u>dz</u>	<u>tʃ</u> <u>dʒ</u>	
<u>Lateral</u>			<u>l</u>	<u>ʎ</u>	
<u>Trill</u>			<u>r</u>		
<u>Tap</u>			<u>ɾ</u>		

Notes:

- Written ⟨ch⟩ is believed to have represented the affricate [tʃ], but since the spelling often alternates with ⟨c⟩, it may also have represented [k].
- Word-final ⟨g⟩ may sometimes represent [tʃ], as in *gaug* "joy" (also spelled *gauch*).
- Intervocalic ⟨z⟩ could represent either [z] or [dz].
- Written ⟨j⟩ could represent either [dʒ] or [j].

Vowels

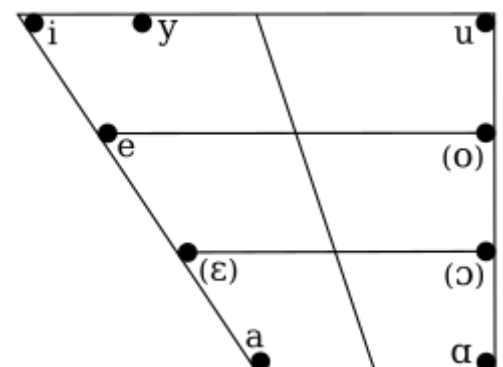
Monophthongs

Old Occitan vowels

	<u>Front</u>	<u>Back</u>
<u>Close</u>	<u>i</u> <u>y</u>	<u>u</u>
<u>Close-mid</u>	<u>e</u>	(<u>o</u>)
<u>Open-mid</u>	[<u>ɛ</u>]	[<u>ɔ</u>]
<u>Open</u>	<u>a</u>	<u>ɑ</u>

Notes:

- [o] apparently raised to [u] during the 12th and the 13th centuries, but the spelling was unaffected: *flor* /flur/ "flower".^[8]
- The open-mid vowels [ɛ] and [ɔ] appear as allophones of /e/ and /u/, respectively, under certain circumstances in stressed syllables.



This vowel chart gives a general idea of the vowel space of Old Occitan. It is not meant to be a precise mapping of the tongue positions, which would be impossible anyway since there are no native speakers of Old Occitan.

Diphthongs and triphthongs

Old Occitan diphthongs and triphthongs

IPA	Example	Meaning
falling		
/aj/	<u>paire</u>	father
/aw/	<u>autre</u>	other
/uj/	<u>conoiser</u>	to know
/uw/	<u>dous</u>	sweet
/ɔj/	<u>pois</u>	then
/ɔw/	<u>mou</u>	it moves
/ej/	<u>vei</u>	I see
/ew/	<u>beure</u>	to drink
/ɛj/	<u>seis</u>	six
/ɛw/	<u>breu</u>	short
/yj/	<u>cuid</u>	I believe
/iw/	<u>estiu</u>	summer
rising		
/jɛ/	<u>miels</u>	better
/wɛ/	<u>cuelh</u>	he receives
/wɔ/	<u>cuolh</u>	he receives
triphthongs stress always falls on middle vowel		
/jɛj/	<u>lieis</u>	her
/jɛw/	<u>ieu</u>	I
/wɔj/	<u>nuoit</u>	night
/wɛj/	<u>pueis</u>	then
/wɔw/	<u>uou</u>	egg
/wɛw/	<u>bueu</u>	ox

Morphology

Some notable characteristics of Old Occitan:

- It had a two-case system (nominative and oblique), as in Old French, with the oblique derived from the Latin accusative case. The declensional categories were also similar to those of Old French; for example, the Latin third-declension nouns with stress shift between the nominative and accusative were maintained in Old Occitan only in nouns referring to people.
- There were two distinct conditional tenses: a "first conditional", similar to the conditional tense in other Romance language, and a "second conditional", derived from the Latin pluperfect indicative tense. The second conditional is cognate with the literary pluperfect in Portuguese,

the *-ra* imperfect subjunctive in Spanish, the second preterite of very early Old French (*Sequence of Saint Eulalia*) and probably the future perfect in modern *Gascon*.

Extracts

- From *Bertran de Born's Ab joi mou lo vers e-l comens* (c. 1200, translated by James H. Donalson):

*Bela Domna·l vostre cors gens
E·lh vostre bel olh m'an conquis,
E·l doutz esgartz e lo clars vis,
E·l vostre bels essenhamens,
Que, can be m'en pren esmansa,
De beutat no·us trob egansa:
La genser etz c'om posc'e·l mon
chauzir,
O no·i vei clar dels olhs ab que·us remir.*

O pretty lady, all your grace
and eyes of beauty conquered me,
sweet glance and brightness of your face
and all your nature has to tell
so if I make an appraisal
I find no one like in beauty:
most pleasing to be found in all the world
or else the eyes I see you with have
dimmed.

See also

- [Occitan conjugation](#)
- [Occitan phonology](#)

Further reading

- Frede Jensen. *The Syntax of Medieval Occitan*, 2nd edn. De Gruyter, 2015 (1st edn. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986). Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 208. 978-3-484-52208-4.
 - French translation: Frede Jensen. *Syntaxe de l'ancien occitan*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1994.
- William D. Paden. *An Introduction to Old Occitan*. Modern Language Association of America, 1998. [ISBN 0-87352-293-1](#).
- Romieu, Maurice; Bianchi, André (2002). *Iniciacion a l'occitan ancian / Initiation à l'ancien occitan* (in Occitan and French). Pessac: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux. [ISBN 2-86781-275-5](#).
- Povl Skårup. *Morphologie élémentaire de l'ancien occitan*. Museum Tusculanum Press, 1997, [ISBN 87-7289-428-8](#)
- Nathaniel B. Smith & [Thomas Goddard Bergin](#). *An Old Provençal Primer*. Garland, 1984, [ISBN 0-8240-9030-6](#)

References

1. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Old Provençal" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/oldp1253>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
2. [Rebecca Posner](#), *The Romance Languages*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, [ISBN 0-521-28139-3](#)
3. Frank M. Chambers, *An Introduction to Old Provençal Versification*. Diane, 1985 [ISBN 0-87169-167-1](#)

4. "The Early Occitan period is generally considered to extend from c. 800 to 1000, Old Occitan from 1000 to 1350, and Middle Occitan from 1350 to 1550" in William W. Kibler, *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia*, Routledge, 1995, ISBN 0-8240-4444-4
5. Smith and Bergin, *Old Provençal Primer*, p. 2
6. Riquer, Martí de, *Història de la Literatura Catalana*, vol. 1. Barcelona: Edicions Ariel, 1964
7. The charts are based on phonologies given in Paden, William D., *An Introduction to Old Occitan*, New York 1998
8. See Paden 1998, p. 101

External links

- A site with a presentation of Old Occitan (<http://www.lingweenie.org/occitan/>)

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